



**WIRRAL  
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# **Children and Young People's Local Voice**

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**Wirral Children and Young  
People's Department and  
Wirral Intelligence Service**

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**December 2017**

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## Children and Young People's Local Voice

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### Background to JSNA – Joint Strategic Needs Assessment

#### **What is a JSNA?**

A Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, better known as a JSNA, is intended to be a systematic review of the health and wellbeing needs of the local population, informing local priorities, policies and strategies that in turn inform local commissioning priorities that will improve health and wellbeing outcomes and reduce inequalities throughout the Borough.

#### **Who is involved?**

Information from Council, NHS and other partners is collected and collated to inform the JSNA and this reflects the important role that all organisations and sectors have (statutory, voluntary, community and faith) in improving the health and wellbeing of Wirral's residents.

#### **About this document**

This JSNA section looks to contain the most relevant information on the topic and provides an overview of those related key aspects

#### **How can you help?**

If you have ideas or any suggestions about these issues or topics then please email us at [wirralintelligenceservice@wirral.gov.uk](mailto:wirralintelligenceservice@wirral.gov.uk) or go to <https://www.wirralintelligenceservice.org/>

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## Content overview

<b>Abstract</b>	<p>This is a summary of those opportunities and instances that Wirral's Children and Young People's Department and key partners have sought the views of those accessing the services provided, involving them, and seeking to understand and incorporate their views into the wider decision-making process.</p> <p>There numerous examples of how this conversation has been created and a description of some of the processes with a view to including more as they are created and developed.</p> <p>This document provides some insight into those issues that children and young people find most important to them</p>
<b>Intended or potential audience</b>	<p><b>Internal</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Wirral Children's Board</li><li>• Wirral Children and Young People - Senior Leadership Team</li><li>• Wirral Children and Young People Children's Joint Commissioning Group</li><li>• Children and Young People Department workforce</li></ul> <p><b>External</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Future in Mind Steering Group</li><li>• Wirral Partnership</li><li>• Wider Children's workforce across Wirral</li></ul>
<b>Links with other topic areas</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Name sections of WIS site following review</li></ul>

# Wirral JSNA: Children, Young People and Families: Local Voice

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## What do we know?

## Why is this important?

### Introduction

Children's participation is more than just asking them for their ideas and views. It's about listening to them, taking them seriously and turning their ideas and suggestions into reality. It is also about providing them with the ability to influence some of the things that affect them and at the same time helping adults understand children's issues through their lens. The literature suggests that the accounts and lived experiences of children and young people regarding their world and how they experience it can contribute significantly and meaningfully to new knowledge and in doing so can enhance services that are provided to children

Participation is important for children because it gives them an opportunity to have a say about issues and decisions that affect them. As a result services created for children will better reflect their needs. The involvement of children, as part of the community and users of services, can make sure agencies and organisations are relevant to them. Their participation ensures what is provided is what is needed, and children are more likely to support the outcome if they have been involved in developing it.

## Wirral approach

Wirral has a strong record of involving children and young people in developing service delivery and in local democratic and community processes. The overarching feature of the local approach to the involvement, engagement and participation of children and young people locally are The Five Charter Values outlined below:

### The Five Charter Values

#### **We will ensure that we have positive attitudes to children and young people.**

##### Priorities

- We promote positive attitudes which enhance our work and allow more equality
- Young people participate in our services

#### **We will ensure that we are accessible to children and young people**

##### Priorities

- Young people will be safe
- We are a welcoming organisation

#### **We will ensure that we have appropriate resources to support children and young people.**

##### Priorities

- Young people are part of our resource planning and have an influence on our budgets
- We are a responsible employer

#### **We will ensure that our information will support children and young people**

##### Priorities

- Our information is young people specific and available to them
- Our information is influenced by young people

## **We will ensure that we have the skills to enable children and young people's participation and to support them to develop skills to participate.**

### Priorities

- We provide opportunities for young people to develop their skills
- We provide opportunities for our staff to develop their skills

These principles should be considered in all involvement, engagement and participation of children and young people and form a strong framework from which to develop strong communication relationships that in turn inform our current and future service provision and commissioning.

For further details please contact Lindsay Davidson at [lindsaydavidson@wirral.gov.uk](mailto:lindsaydavidson@wirral.gov.uk)

## **How we involve and engage children and young people across Wirral**

### **Wirral's Engagement and Participation framework**

#### ***A local approach to involve children and young people through an engagement and participation framework***

In order to continue to ensure that young people are able to engage and fully participate in decision making and that services and organisations routinely involve young people an Engagement and Participation Framework has been developed.

The Framework comprises of three main elements, namely:

- *Youth Engagement Strategic Champions* - A virtual team of key elected members and chief officers across the private and public sectors and the voluntary, community and faith sector.
- *Youth Engagement Reference Group* – a reference group of officers who are have been trained in engaging young people and who can be brought together quickly to respond to need, co-ordinate children and young people's participation and engagement activities.
- *Youth Voice Group* – an overarching young people's group, with close links to ongoing work with Children Looked After (CLA), including the Children in Care Council.

#### **Link to full framework**

[Wirral Young People's Engagement and Participation Framework 2014](#)

### **Why a framework?**

It is important to ensure that children and young people's voices are heard as:

- Young people have a right to positively contribute as decision makers and services and organisations have a responsibility to ensure they are given the opportunity
- We have an aspiration to make a positive difference to the lives and experiences of Wirral's young people through enabling them to be true partners in democratic processes
- To build young people's capacity for involvement in the future and ensure they are recognised (and recognise themselves) as valued members of the wider community
- To enable young people to have a range of enjoyable, accessible and relevant opportunities for their positive engagement in service design and delivery and Wirral's community and democratic processes
- To positively promote young people and their achievements to counteract negative societal stereotypes and misconceptions regarding young people

- To enable harder to reach young people to have a voice in service provision and their local community and democratic processes

There are a number of regular events / projects that take place in Wirral which capture children and young people's voices, these are detailed below.

## What is this telling us?

### Local Voice from Wirral Children and Young People

The following section describes the involvement, engagement, consultation and participation with children and young people from across Wirral. The section starts with those areas of work related to the Participation and Engagement of those in corporate care. It goes on to describe where other examples of active consultation have been undertaken and then used to inform service provision and future commissioning

#### Local Voice: The Participation and Engagement Service

The Participation and Engagement Service, that was (Previously known as the Inclusion Service) aims to:

- Ensure children looked after and young people have a voice in decisions made about them
- Represent children and young people's views locally, regionally and nationally
- Develop links for children looked after and young people to contribute towards the development of the Children and Young People's Department
- Ensure that services for them are relevant to their needs as a diverse group
- Develop projects locally, regionally and nationally
- Ensure children looked after and care leavers are consulted around service delivery, and are involved in the recruitment, selection and training of social care staff
- Support the Children in Care Council and Care Leavers Council to effectively monitor service delivery in areas of social care that affect them
- Create opportunities for young people in care and leaving care to participate in positive activities, and promote their achievements

#### Key Areas of work for the Participation and Engagement Service

##### *Children in Care Council (CICC) / Care Leavers Council (CLC)*

The Participation and Engagement Service conduct monthly / fortnightly meetings and support in developing agendas. The CICC and CLC engage in various projects, consultations and activities and are supported in having a voice when contributing to the development of the CYPD and the improvement of service delivery.

The CICC/CLC offers children and young people the chance to get their voices heard, allowing them to take part in things they would never have had the chance to do before. It gives children skills that set them up for life as well as giving them the knowledge of all their rights and what they are entitled to.

Creating opportunities for working in partnership with internal and external professionals is achieved at CICC/CLC meetings and other methods such as:

- Focus groups
- Consultations
- Forums
- Programmes

Examples include:

- Restructure Feedback  
<http://www.therightsideofcare.com/news/2016/05/19/cicc-survey>
- The Health Passport  
<http://www.therightsideofcare.com/news/2016/12/13/health-passport>
- Prioritises for 2017  
<http://www.therightsideofcare.com/news/2016/12/21/quick-survey-and-merry-christmas>
- Children's Commissioner, Help at Hand Advice Service  
<https://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/DocumentsHelp-at-Hand-Information-Pack-PPP-05.07.2017.pptx>
- Corporate Parenting Strategy  
<http://www.therightsideofcare.com/news/2016/05/05/we-need-your-views>
- The Care leavers Association and Three Circles Fostering survey  
<http://www.therightsideofcare.com/news/2016/10/17/lgbt-survey>
- The Princes Trust  
<http://www.therightsideofcare.com/news/2016/11/03/care-leavers-questionnaire>

Feedback is provided when possible:

- <http://www.therightsideofcare.com/news/2016/07/13/survey-results>
- <http://www.therightsideofcare.com/news/2016/07/13/website-feedback-competition-results>
- <http://www.therightsideofcare.com/news/2017/03/14/survey-results>

Children looked after and care leavers are informed about projects that have been identified locally, regionally and nationally and are encouraged to participate. Most recently Katie Hatton, one of our Care Leavers was involved in the Princes Trust 'Young Researchers' project.

### ***Recruitment and Selection***

Children looked after and care leavers are involved in the recruitment and selection of social care staff at all levels and are also called upon externally i.e. Step Up (Liverpool John Moores University) for recruitment purposes. A variety of models for recruitment and selection purposes i.e. group, 1-2-1 etc. are offered and externally, children and young people have been invited to feedback sessions and the decision making of further recruitment processes

### ***Activities and Achievements***

#### *Children Looked After Awards:*

The event is growing every year and celebrates the accomplishments of children looked after and care leavers on Wirral. Each achievement is special, and every young person nominated receives an award to celebrate theirs.

### *Listen to Me Awards:*

2017 hosts the fifth annual awards ceremony to celebrate adults in Wirral who listen to looked after children and care leavers and the event has grown rapidly since its conception – receiving a record 84 nominations from local children and young people this year, compared to 10 nominations in 2011.

### **Training**

*Ongoing training for young people includes Recruitment and Selection, Young Inspectors and Team Building.*

Children looked after and care leavers are involved in the training of social care staff and support the Fostering Team. They assist with various foster carers training i.e. Drop-ins, Connected Carers and Life Skills and a CLC member now also sits on the fostering panel.

The CICC/CLC hold annual conferences and work alongside social care professionals to make sure that young people's voices are heard. Organised by the Children in Care and Care Leavers Councils (with the support of the Participation and Engagement Service), professionals are invited to the event which aims to encourage positive relationships between social workers and young people, talking together about how to offer the best service to children looked after and care leavers on Wirral.

### **The Right Side of Care**

This is a dedicated website for children looked after on Wirral. RSOC information packs are also distributed to all children and young people when they become looked after

## **Other examples of active consultation: inform service provision and future commissioning**

### **Local Voice: Youth Parliament – November 2016**

The Youth Parliament is an annual event that has run for fourteen years. Originally the Youth Voice Conference and Youth Parliament were run as a combined event as part of local democracy week, however for the past four years the Parliament has become a separate event. The events take place a month apart and young people are encouraged to take forward issues raised from the Youth Voice Conference which is organised by the Youth Voice Group.

The Youth Parliament is a permanent item on the annual cycle of meetings and is a called full council meeting chaired by the Mayor and minutes of the meeting are posted on the council website. In 2016 for the first time, members of the Youth Voice met with the Mayor prior to the conference to decide on the final motions and agree on the format of the Youth Parliament. 48 young people attended the Young Parliament from 6 schools, 2 youth service groups and 1 group from the National Citizenship Service. 41 elected members attended.

The aims of the annual Youth Parliament are:

- To provide opportunities for young people to develop debating skills
- To provide young people with the opportunity to debate with Councillors and peers about issues important to them
- To help young people understand local democratic processes

## **Headlines from discussion**

The main issues identified for young people were access to counselling service, transitional support for mental health issues post 18 years, access to support for young people with disabilities and service for transgender young people

## **Approach**

The Parliament took place at Wallasey Town Hall and every Secondary school, partner organisations and Youth Service groups was invited to attend and sent a briefing pack for with instructions and advice on the debating process and how to put a motion forward for debate. As in previous years, elected members were invited to join young people for refreshments before the event to introduce themselves and help to break down barriers towards an open debate.

Some schools and youth groups attended the Parliament without putting a motion forward and other groups submitted a motion for debate as part of the recruitment process. This year, the Youth Voice Group put forward two motions which were formulated from issues raised at the Youth Voice Conference on mental health. Upton High School and the newly formed Youth SEND Voice Group for young people with disabilities also submitted motions.

The method of showing short films on the themes being discussed was also new to the Youth Parliament in 2016. This had been a method used as part of the format for the debate held at the Youth Voice Conference and feedback received from participants was extremely positive.

Therefore, at the Youth Parliament, a film about mental health was shown at the beginning of the debate to build a common understanding around the issue. Another film was shown to begin the transgender debate called 'My Gender Transition from female to male' to help raise awareness around the issue.

## **Key areas discussed**

### **Motions debated**

The six motions proposed by schools/groups and debated were:

1. Should Class A drug use be de-criminalised?
2. Should trigger warnings be used in universities?
3. There is a need for a mental health counselling service outside of schools hours and in areas where young people can access safely, confidentially and conveniently.
4. There is a need for a transitional support service for young people affected by mental health as when they reach 19yrs the referral process is flawed and young people can be lost to services.
5. Young people with disabilities need access to the same support as other young people. This should be provided without any prejudice, judgement or assumption that their mental health is poor because of their disability.
6. The process of providing hormone replacement therapy for transgender young people should be earlier.

The debates were timed to last for 20 minutes and the council committee officers counted the votes and minutes were taken. The process for the debate is that the proposer and opposer of the motions speak for up to four minutes and the seconder has two minutes to formally second the motion.

## *What young people told us*

The following are key points raised by young people within each debate:

1. Should trigger warnings be used in universities?
  - It's impossible to cover all potential triggers.
  - If students are genuinely disturbed by materials used they will speak with their teachers.

The proposal was put and carried 21: 9

2. Counselling services for young people need to be provided outside of schools hours and in areas where young people can access safely, confidentially and conveniently.
  - It's easier to see someone outside of school and keep on top of work in school time.
  - Waiting for CAMHS can be far too long.
  - Anxiety levels in school can make it hard to access any support.
  - Concerns were raised about confidentiality in school in relation to accessing counselling and support.

The proposal was put and carried 34:2

3. The process of providing hormone replacement therapy (HRT) for Transgender people should be earlier.
  - Isn't it better to educate children not to bully people who are different rather than resort to such radical treatment?
  - Your body is going to change as you grow up, so why not grow into the body that you want to be in?
  - The word is choice; it's a word that is part of wider debate. It is about recognising the rights of all people.
  - Identity is a feeling, it's not a choice. It's a feeling you should be able to make decisions on your own life.

The proposal was put and carried 29:5

4. Transitional support services need to be provided for young people affected by mental health. When reaching the age of 19yrs the referral process into adult mental health services is flawed and young people can be lost to services and put at greater risk.
  - There needs to be a support service from CAMHS into AMHS as you have built trust with the CAMHS workers.
  - As young person you have to repeat all that information again and again which can raise the issues again, so if there was a transitional service it would help with this
  - There needs to be an individually based service - if the person is not ready for AMHS then they are not ready. This is an issue, all we need to do is talk to young people as really is their choice

The proposal was put and carried 36:0

5. Young people with disabilities need access to the same mental health support services as other young people. This should be provided without prejudice, judgement or assumption that their mental health is poor because of their disability.
  - We need to treat mental health services differently to physical illness.
  - The Equality Act 2010 says everyone should be treated the same, disabled or not.
  - Some disabilities are hidden, so this is an issue, people who have visible disabilities do get targeted which affects their mental health

- How people treat my family affects my mental health when people are throwing looks and bullying. How far does equality go, I need the right to have a mental health service. We should be looking at all our people are treated. Making us fit into boxes and categories, it won't work as no one fits in a box or a category, we are not the same.

The proposal was put and carried 36: 0

#### 6. Should Class A drugs be decriminalised?

- It's better to address the root cause of why people are taking drugs.
- We would advocate clean drugs and be offering counselling. In decriminalising it, we would get rid of the social crime around drug use.
- If NHS could monitor the process of drug taking then we could work to reduce people's intake.
- We're talking mental health and drug addiction is a form of mental health. Helping them through this issue is what we need to do and give them support in regards to this.
- Norway decriminalised drugs and has the lowest drug overdose and drug crime rate in Europe

The proposal was put and lost 12:27

#### **Links to full report**

[Youth Parliament 2016 report](#)

### **Local Voice: Youth Voice Conference – October 2016**

The Youth Voice Conference is an annual Wirral event which has been held for some 14 years, it is planned, delivered and evaluated by young people from the Youth Voice Group in partnership with relevant other youth groups and partners across the borough.

The 2016 conference focused on mental health and aimed to provide young people with the opportunity to, explore current issues affecting the lives of young people namely of mental health; improve their understanding of issues around mental health and question council officers, Councillors and officers from partner organisations on policy matters and to influence service provision related to the young people's mental health.

#### **Headlines**

The main issues for young people included greater provision of counselling services and more funding for mental health services; training and awareness raising for professionals regarding mental health and training for pupils to enable peer support; mental health awareness raising sessions to be undertaken in schools and youth units, and this to include gender and sexuality; school curriculum causing stress for pupils and teachers.

#### **Approach**

The conference took place at Wallasey Town Hall in October 2016 with every secondary school in Wirral being invited to bring groups of young people to the event. Young people from youth provision facilitated by local partners, agencies, local training providers and Youth Support Service projects were also invited to attend. Invitations and conference information packs for teachers, youth workers and young people were distributed extensively to schools, statutory and voluntary organisations. 82 young people attended the event from 10 secondary schools and 2 youth groups.

## **Key areas discussed**

Young people attending the conference all took part in a workshop called 'What is mental health?' Young people also had a choice of attending other workshops, dealing with loss & change; myths and stigmas and changing attitudes.

There was a market stall element to the event provided during the lunch and break times with information stalls from organisations such as Barnardos, Brook, and Health Services in Schools, CAHMS, The Open Door and CYD. The main part of the event was a debate in the Council Chamber. Five themes were debated using motions from schools, New Horizons and the Youth Voice Group as the stimulus. Strategic managers were seated around the table in the centre of the chamber and young people were seated in the areas usually occupied by Councillors. Each debate was introduced by using a short film about the theme, with the aim of helping build a common understanding on the issue

## **What Young People told us**

- Counselling services to be provided in every school and youth club/hub.
- Professionals need to have more understanding and knowledge of mental health and the issues that surround it.
- Teachers and Youth Workers should be trained to deal with panic attacks and other mental health issues.
- Training needed for pupils to help and support other pupils if they do not want to go to a teacher for support.
- Mental health should be discussed more in schools and youth units so that more awareness can be raised about this subject and to help 'normalise' the subject.
- More awareness required around gender and sexuality in relation to mental health is needed.
- Better advertising in schools so pupils know who to go to for help and support.
- More funding needed for mental health support and facilities in schools and clubs.
- Professionals need to visit schools and clubs to find out what works best to help those with mental health difficulties and to inform better service delivery.
- What support can the police give?
- How can young people feel safer on the streets when struggling with mental health?
- The curriculum is putting too much pressure on children and teachers alike and causing stress – what can be done about this?
- A conference/event looking at engagement forums existing from across Wirral is needed to bring young people and professionals together to share good practice and build better links and engagement.

## **Quotes from event**

What we learnt

- *'What help is available for people young people suffering with mental health and more of an insight into how common mental health is*
- *'I learnt that there is more to loss than death'*
- *'learnt about stress and how mental health is portrayed in the media'*
- *'That mental health is extremely common and it is nothing to be ashamed of'*
- *'How to deal with change'*
- *'The stigmas and stereotypes of mental health'*
- *'You are not alone'*

What have you gained from taking part in today?

- *'Confidence, a voice and taking part'*
- *'A better idea of where to go if I want to talk to someone'*
- *'I have developed speaking/debating my point and taking part in the great debate'*
- *'I have a greater understanding about mental health'*
- *'I have gained ways to raise awareness of mental illness to share when I get back to school'*
- *'Mindfulness'*

### **Follow-up**

Recommendations from the Youth Voice Conference have been taken to the Future in Minds Steering Group to ensure that key partner consideration and response.

### **What next**

The Youth Voice Group is planning the 2017 Youth Voice Conference which will take place in October 2017. The theme for this event will be centred on educational issues.

### **Links to full report**

[Youth Voice Conference Report \(November 2016\)](#)

## **Local Voice: SEND Youth Voice Group – October 2016**

Creative Youth Development (CYD) was commissioned by Community Action for Wirral to set up the SEND Youth Voice Group with the aim of influencing the design and delivery of the Local Offer website and the commissioning of services, support and advice available for children in Wirral if they have special educational needs or a disability. The group was commissioned for six months

### **Approach**

CYD facilitates the Youth Voice Group which acts as an overarching mechanism for young people's engagement and offers young people an opportunity to build skills in debating, citizenship, political education, peer education training and conference planning. CYD also offers a range of inclusive and specific projects for young people with disabilities based at Pilgrim Street Arts Centre. It was therefore agreed to organise a launch event at Pilgrim Street facilitated by the Youth Voice Group and Peer Educators from CYD involved in this area of work.

A member of the Youth Voice Group who is visually impaired agreed to chair the launch meeting which was well attended by young people with disabilities, their families and professionals. Based on decisions made at the launch, the SEND Youth Voice Group now meets on a monthly basis at Pilgrim Street. The young people and children use performing arts as a tool to way to understand issues that they want to raise. The adults have a separate meeting and chaired by the young person from the Youth Voice Group who is tasked to ensure that the young people and children's needs are kept paramount in their discussions.

### **Key areas discussed**

- Access to services
- Support from partners
- Unhelpful services
- Nobody listening

### ***What the young people told us***

The group have fed back that local offer website needs to have a daily timetable of activities for children and young people with disabilities. They felt it was crucial that organisations delivering their services meet current safeguarding protocols and have relevant training in place for working with children and young people with disabilities. They felt this was not always in place.

The group facilitated the launch of the Local Offer in October 2016 and created a film about their needs and opinions which was shown at the event. The group has also taken part in and given their opinions in a commissioning process with the Commissioning and Contracts Officer for prospective providers of Short Breaks activities.

### ***What next***

The group is now planning an event which brings together service providers, practitioners, council officers and businesses to explore what can be done to improve the lives of children and young people with disabilities in Wirral. Representatives from the group are also involved in the Youth Reference Group working alongside the Ofsted Improvement Board to ensure that children and young people's views are heard and acted upon within the improvement action plan.

### ***Links to full report***

[SEND Youth Workshop held at Pilgrim Street Arts Centre](#) (October 2016)

## **Local Voice: Young People's Reference Group**

This group provides a formal structure for the Children and Young People's Department (CYPD) to engage with children and young people regarding the department's improvement journey following the 2016 Ofsted inspection

### ***Approach***

The role of the Young People's Reference Group is to act as a point of contact for the improvement board to enable children and young people to be consulted throughout the improvement journey and to ensure that their views, wishes and feeling are taken in to consideration. A mix and range of interested young people from other participation groups (such as the Children in Care Council, Youth Voice Group, Care Leaver's Council, The Hive, SEND Youth Voice, and schools are involved in the group.

### ***Key areas for young people***

The group has been meeting since November 2016 and has identified a number of priority areas and an associated action plan. To date they have:

- Developed a video on leadership and resilience within CYPD officer training.
- Designed a survey which was sent out to children and young people in schools etc. to ascertain their views about being a safe.
- Met with members of the Improvement Board, to update them on their progress and to talk about their major issues.
- Trained to become young inspectors so they can inspect elements of CYPD post Ofsted improvements.

### ***Links to full report***

[Young People's Reference Group Slide set](#)

## **Local Voice: Youth Voice Conference - October 2017**

On the 10<sup>th</sup> October, over 115 Young people from 16 schools and youth groups got together to discuss education and mental health at this year's annual Youth Voice Conference 2017. Held at Wallasey Town Hall, the Youth Voice planned and delivered the conference, which included a performance from Inclusion Dance, who used this to highlight mental health issues relevant to young people

### ***Headlines from discussion***

Feedback from young people included:

- More time in the curriculum to discuss mental health and wellbeing across a whole range of issues and beyond depression and anxiety.
- Less testing and consequently less exam stress. Value us beyond academic achievement and celebrate success in other skills and talents outside of maths and English
- The curriculum to be more relevant to a technological life of the future

### ***Approach***

The conference explored how mental health affects young people in education and enabled improved understanding of issues around education and mental health. An introductory workshop introduced the CAMHS peer led mental health 'first aid kit' project in schools.

A session in the Council Chamber provided young people with the forum to question council officers, councillors and partner organisations on policy matters and to influence service provision related to young people's mental health.

The Town Hall was full of market stalls for attendees to visit on the day; including Teenwirral, Brook, Action For Young Children, Open Door, The Hive, Youth Focus, Barnardos Young Carers and the Cheshire and Wirral Partnership mental health team

### ***Follow-up***

The Youth Voice group are undertaking a full evaluation of the event and once completed the conference report will be available on this site.

## **Local Voice: Listen Up Group (Wirral CAMHS - Involvement Team)**

Listen Up is the Wirral Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service [CAMHS] Involvement Team that consists of a group of young people (YP) who have accessed CAMHS services.

### **Approach**

This is co-ordinated by CAMHS staff, part of the Cheshire & Wirral Partnership NHS Foundation Trust. Listen Up is open to YP aged 5 years to 25 years old. The belief is that YP are best placed to know about the issues that affect them and should be at the heart of developing their interventions and the services that deliver them.

The Listen Up Group aims to:

- Help improve CAMHS.
- Raise awareness of CAMHS for those who don't use the service.
- Make the service more accessible.
- Look into the way the service works so it is effective.
- Open up communication with other young people.

- Give better visibility of people involved in the services.
- Contribute to projects and specific pieces of work.
- Attend conferences with professionals to provide more impact through sharing their lived experience.
- Provide feedback from YP perspective, providing more data and evidence.

### **Key areas discussed**

These are some personal outcomes that young people hoped to achieve from being involved in CAMHS:

- To help others.
- Learn skills and with these new skills learn how to help others.
- To share my story.
- I want to share that I've been there; I know what it feels like. There are strategies and it is important to know that there is support, someone to talk to, rather than having a leaflet and being treated as "an issue to be dealt with on a waiting list"
- I want GP's to know that young people don't need medication as a first port of call, that I want to talk to someone who will understand you, make you feel safe and treated as human being who is having trouble in that moment.
- Participate in something collaboratively.
- Be assertive and share my opinions and beliefs.
- Influence wider professional groups e.g. teachers.
- To be visible to professionals, share young people's opinions.
- To ensure services work to tackle problems while they are still young rather than missing it till 10 years later when the problems are bigger.
- To be involved in marketing, advertising young people's experience in being in CAMHS to reduce stigma.
- To give back; CAMHS did a lot for me and to help other in the same situation so young people don't get lost in the cracks.

The young people who are involved in the Listen Up Group are mostly young people who have accessed CAMHS services. There are also young people who want to get involved as they are interested in learning more about the work of CAMHS. CAMHS currently has a core group of four young people attending the group on a monthly basis with others who get involved as they can but are always looking for more.

### **Ideas – Suggestions and Opportunities for service providers and commissioners**

The Listen Up Group are given pieces of work by the Primary Mental Health Team, CAMHS digital, Participation and Engagement projects, the access sub group and some of the suggestions for projects come from the young people themselves.

### **Re-design of the new CAMHS department at the Stein Centre**

In the last year the group has worked on the re-design of the new CAMHS department at the Stein Centre, now known as the Birch centre. This process involved young people working alongside the architect and designer in providing a valuable contribution to the layout of the clinical and waiting area in accordance with the age of the young people using the services.

The young people were given the opportunity to choose the design and décor for the interior and exterior of the building and their design ideas and vision were used by the architect to create the clinical space. The group were instrumental in the introduction of a parent/ family room being introduced to the department, from which the young people are now looking at ways of involving parents/carers in contributing to shaping services.

### **[Redesign of CAMHS Service - The Birch Centre – Slide pack](#)**

## Review of Communication content

The group have also reviewed the letters/ information leaflets that are sent out to parents/carers and young people, including transition letters and the Primary Mental Health Team leaflet. The language, layout, content and manner of the letters were discussed and amended to make them more user friendly and person centred.

## Sharing understanding with Service Leads

More recently two of the young people were invited to meet with the Chairman of CWP and the Associate Director of Nursing to talk about their roles in the Listen Up Group how they benefit from being involved and the work that they have achieved over the past year.

## Future involvement

- involving young people in improving the transition between CAMHS and adult services
- involving young people in staff training
- exploring how we can get parents/ carers more involved in co-production

## Future Local Voice engagement, involvement and consultation

The 2017 annual Youth Parliament will take place on 10 November 2017 at Wallasey Town Hall. Details will be added to this document as a later version and published

## Contact details

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